

Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson
“The Homeland Security Department’s Budget Submission for Fiscal Year 2016”
April 29, 2015

As prepared for delivery:

I want to welcome and thank Secretary Johnson for testifying before us this morning. He may be one of the busiest department heads as he manages the responsibilities of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and answers to the call of dozens of committees. I appreciate his service and commitment to his work.

When I became chairman of this committee, my first priority was to develop a mission statement with my ranking member, Senator Carper. As it turns out, our mission mirrors that of the department. The mission statement of DHS is clear—to ensure a homeland that is safe, secure and resilient against terrorism and other hazards—but the specific tasks of each component are varied and complex. From securing cyber networks and our borders to identifying and combating violent extremism to providing disaster assistance, the day-to-day operations of DHS are significant and affect the lives of every American.

A phrase common to the discussion of just about any homeland security program is that we are “buying down risk.” We want to be sure investments are being made in the best programs that are actually addressing the most pressing threats and hazards.

I am particularly interested in how DHS is proposing to allocate resources on cyber- and border security, which are two key priorities of this committee—along with combating violent extremism, protecting critical infrastructure, and assisting you, Secretary Johnson, in breaking down barriers and bureaucracy at the Department of Homeland Security.

On cybersecurity, the department is struggling to implement its flagship cybersecurity programs—Einstein and Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation (CDM). I have some questions about whether these programs really are the best approach for federal cybersecurity. Einstein, which is supposed to detect and prevent intrusions on civilian federal networks, has yet to implement a government-wide intrusion prevention capability in the seven years since its creation. This is despite a fiscal year 2016 request for \$480 million, spending that already has totaled more than \$1 billion, and projected costs of \$3.13 billion through FY2020. I am also concerned about CDM—a program intended to monitor federal networks for good cyber hygiene. The foundation for CDM is a similar, but flawed, program at the State Department, the effectiveness of which has been questioned by recent cyberattacks and oversight reports. It is important that the history of these programs informs decisions about their future and about Congress’s appropriations.

On border security and immigration, there are significant concerns about whether the administration’s current strategy is adequate. Specifically, despite the justification for the president’s executive action on immigration to be about targeting “felons, not families,” deportations for this fiscal year have plummeted. And illegal migration to this country from Central America continues to be a concern. While we are not yet seeing the same surge we saw last year, the crisis will not be resolved until we return to pre-2012 levels.

Another concern is the administration’s recent Central American Minors programs, which provides a legal alternative to parents who wish to bring their children to the U.S. The expansiveness of this

program is controversial, particularly in that it allows those granted deferred action to apply. Why are those here temporarily able to permanently relocate their children to the U.S. at the taxpayers' expense?

Another major issue facing DHS is the failure to manage major acquisition projects, a primary reason for DHS' inclusion on the High-Risk List of the Government Accountability Office (GAO). Every dollar wasted on a poorly managed and failing program is one that is not advancing the nation's security.

The GAO recently reported that only two of 22 major projects at DHS that GAO reviewed are actually on time and on schedule. These projects together accounted for more than \$10 billion in annual spending. The GAO was unable to assess six projects because they did not have approved baselines. The GAO has also identified two of the department's information technology acquisition projects as part of the 10 highest-risk IT acquisition programs in the federal government. We need to take a hard look at ways to improve acquisition policies at DHS, and I look forward to working with the department and my colleagues on this issue.

Additionally, DHS should be measuring the performance of its programs as thoroughly as possible. Modernization of financial systems to enable better reporting and insight into how funds are budgeted and spent is perhaps one of the most important activities within a number of components and headquarters at DHS. Gaining that business intelligence should enable the department to stretch its resources further.

DHS has also taken steps in the last few years to improve the way it measures whether state and local governments are using their \$1.3 billion in homeland security grants to advance core capabilities. I am interested to hear how the department is strengthening these efforts.

Again, Secretary Johnson, thank you for joining us today, and I look forward to your testimony.